



## Island visitors meet the Kings and Queens of Carnival Music “up close and personal!”

In keeping with the Carnival season, the directors of the Stichting Carnival Arubaanse (SAC, the governing body of Carnival,) always schedule an event that involves the tourists in this delightful part of island culture. Usually it is what is popularly known as a “jump-up,” an informal parade with a typical carnival brass band and a heap of “carnival spirit” as island visitors and residents dance their way around the Palm Beach area.

This year, SAC arranged a most unusual and informative event at the Fort Zoutman on Sunday night. Instead of the usual informal parade, the audience was treated to a sampling of the “Best of Carnival” featuring some of the great winners of today and years past that have earned the titles of Roadmarch King or Queen, performing their competition winning songs.

The environs of the Fort in Oranjestad was packed to capacity, and the ambiance was joyous with the lively music and spirit of Carnival. Hosting the event along with Elsa Krozendijk was “Mr. Carnival” himself, Juby Naar, and along with Elsa, provided quite a bit of comic relief. Juby also regaled the gathering with an enlightening history of some of the greater victories of some of these performers, and how they have impacted the history and spirit of carnival over the years.

Performing on Sunday were this year’s Roadmarch Queen and King in the Infantil category, Charela Lopes and Nigil Hoek, also performing was popular young singer Quincy Hassam, and past winner Mighty Whitee, a very unusual and entertaining figure on the Roadmarch circuit. The dancers of the Sun Rise Dance Troupe in addition to Timbiriche & Lolypop dance groups accompanied the performances. Many a tourist was coaxed on stage to attempt to replicate the remarkable gyrations and dance steps, and we must admit, gave it their best shot!

The end of the evening’s program included some of the true greats of Carnival Music History. Linda Bislip, aka “Rasta Linda,” the first woman to win the Roadmarch title, twenty-five years ago. “Mighty Cliffy” singing his famous “Road on Fire” from years past, that is still a favorite played during carnival parades up to today. The Grande Finale featured last year’s winner, “Mighty Hippy” Ruben Trapenberg performing his song “Wok” with a backdrop of dancers in some of the most elaborate and beautiful costumes to have graced a carnival parade. Cameras were clicking and the entire audience was on their feet dancing along and doing the dance steps all along the way with the performers. One lady in particular, Debby from Boston, Mass became so immersed in the spirit of the evening that Tecla Kelly, the President of SAC, for the first time in the fifty-two year history of Carnival bestowed on her the title of “Tourist Queen of Carnival!” From there the TBS Brass band led everyone out into the streets of Oranjestad to finish the evening in true carnival style!